

**§10503. Forfeiture of seized fish, wildlife and equipment**

Whenever a libel has been filed pursuant to section 10502: [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**1. Notice and hearing of libel.** The judge shall fix a time for the hearing of the libel and issue a notice of the libel to all persons interested, citing them to appear at the time and place appointed and show cause why the fish, wildlife, currency or equipment possessed should not be declared forfeited. A true and attested copy of the libel and notice must be posted in 2 conspicuous places in the town or place where the fish, wildlife, currency or equipment possessed was seized, or in such place or places as is ordered by the court, at least 10 days before the day on which the libel is returnable. Copies must be served on common carriers; [PL 2011, c. 253, §5 (AMD).]

**2. Disposal and sale of fish or wildlife.** If the court finds that the fish or wildlife seized will be unsuitable for food or other use on the day on which the libel is returnable, the court shall order the officer making the seizure to dispose of the seized fish or wildlife. The officer disposing of the seized fish or wildlife shall, in case of sale, hold the proceeds of the sale subject to order of the court for decision as to the right of the claimant, if any appear, to the fish or wildlife. If the court finds the claimant, if any appear, is not entitled to the fish or wildlife, the officer making the seizure shall turn over to the court the proceeds of the sale, and the court shall forward the proceeds to the commissioner in the same manner as is provided by section 10203; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**3. Declaration of forfeiture.** If no claimant appears, the court shall, on proof of notice, declare the articles forfeited to the State; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**4. Claim procedures.** If a person appears and claims the articles, or any part of the articles, as having a right to the possession of them at the time when they were seized, that claimant shall file with the court a claim in writing stating specifically:

- A. The right so claimed; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- B. The foundation of the claim; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- C. The item so claimed; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- D. The time and place of the seizure; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- E. The name of the officer by whom the articles were seized; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- F. That the articles were not possessed in violation of this Part with the person's knowledge or consent; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- G. That person's business and place of residence. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

If a person makes a claim in accordance with this subsection, that claimant must be admitted as a party to the process, and the court shall proceed to determine the truth of the allegations in the claim and libel and may hear any pertinent evidence offered by the libelant or claimant; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**5. Return of articles or proceeds to claimant.** If the court is, upon the hearing, satisfied that the fish, wildlife, currency or equipment possessed was not possessed in violation of this Part and that the claimant is entitled to the custody of any part of the articles, the court shall give the claimant an order

in writing, directed to the officer having the articles in custody, commanding delivery to the claimant of the articles or proceeds derived from the sale of the articles, to which the claimant is found to be entitled, within 48 hours after demand;  
[PL 2011, c. 253, §6 (AMD).]

**6. Judgment against claimant.** If the court finds the claimant entitled to no part of the articles seized, the court shall render judgment against that claimant for the libelant for costs, including costs incurred to remove or euthanize the fish or wildlife possessed without a permit, to be taxed as in civil cases before the court, and issue execution thereon, and declare the articles forfeited to the State;  
[PL 2015, c. 374, §1 (AMD).]

**7. Appeal.** The claimant may appeal and shall recognize with sureties as on appeals in civil causes from a judge;  
[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

**8. Costs.** The costs are:

A. For the libel, 50¢; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. For entering the libel, 30¢; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. For trying the libel, \$1; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

D. For a notice, 50¢; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

E. For posting notices and return, \$1; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

F. For an order to restore or deliver, 25¢; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

G. For executing the order, 50¢; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

H. Per mile for all necessary travel, 10¢; and [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §60 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §60 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

**9. Forms.** The department shall provide forms for all cases arising under this section.  
[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §B60 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 253, §§5, 6 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 374, §1 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

*All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the Second Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2025. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.*

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.